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PROPHETS AND MESSENGERS

Difference between a Prophet and Messenger

[1] The word *nabi* comes from the word *naba'un* which means information or to inform (*khobar*). A *nabi* (prophet) is someone whom Allah (swt) inspires but does not come with a new Sacred Law. They are generally there to keep the people on the straight path based on a prior Sacred Law.

[2] The word *rasul* comes from the word *risalah*, which means message. A *rasul* (messenger) is the same as a *nabi* (prophet) but they are also given a Sacred Law that generally abrogates the previous sacred law because of all the corruption that has crept into the previous law.

Number of Prophets and Messengers

[1] In regard to the total number of Prophets and Messengers, Allah's Messenger (saw) said, **"One hundred and twenty-four thousand, among whom three-hundred and thirteen were messengers, and the first of whom was Adam and the last was Muhammad"** (*Musnad* of Imam Ahmad).

[2] This Hadith is a lone report (*khobar wahid*) and not something that provides conviction and definitive knowledge. Therefore, this will be used as an indicator of the number of prophets. We can't insist on a particular number, as it could be more or less than the true amount and we could be negating prophecy.

[3] Allah (swt) says, **"We have sent a messenger to every nation"** (Qur'an 10:47).

[4] Allah (swt) says, **"We have sent other Messengers before you – some We have mentioned to you and some We have not"** (Qur'an 40:78).

[5] There are twenty-five mentioned in the Qur'an: (1) Adam (2) Idris (3) Nuh (4) Hud (5) Salih (6) Ibrahim (7) Isma'il (8) Ishaq (9) Lut (10) Ya'qub (11) Yusuf (12) Shu'ayb (13) Ayyub (14) Musa (15) Harun (16) Dhul-kifl (17) Dawud (18) Sulayman (19) Ilyas (20) Al-Yasa (21) Yunus (22) Zakariyya (23) Yahya (24) Isa (25) Muhammad (peace be upon them all).

[6] Other prophets not mentioned by name: Yusha (as), Daniel (as) and Khadir (as). (There was miracle about Khadir (as) that things became green where he sat). Luqman (as) who is mentioned in the Qur'an was not a Prophet but mentioned for his wisdom.

[7] Most of the Prophets were sent to Bani Isra'il.

That Which is Necessary

1) Truthfulness

- i. Prophets can't lie; they are truthful in everything they convey from Allah (swt). They are divinely protected from lying on purpose or by accident. Allah (swt) gives them an

inimitable miracle that can't be challenged by anybody and proves their truthfulness. If they did not say the truth, they will not have a miracle because Allah (swt) won't allow a miracle to manifest from somebody considered an imposter. (Dajjal is different as he will be sent as a *fitnah*).

- ii. Allah (swt) says, **"And the Messengers told the truth"** (Qur'an 36:52).

2) Trustworthiness (Amanah)

- i. *Amanah* means not to withhold anything and fulfil the message with *amanah* (which differs from truthfulness). Prophets must deliver whatever Allah (swt) has told them to do deliver.
- ii. *Amanah* also includes preserving all of their external limbs and internal self from falling into anything *haram*, *makruh* and blameworthy. They must sometimes do the sub-optimal thing but will be reprimanded for it.
- iii. *Amanah* also refers to personal piety.
- iv. Allah (swt) has told us to follow the Prophets closely thus they can't be prone to mistakes and sins.
- v. Allah (swt) says, **"And follow him so that you may find guidance"** (Qur'an 7:158).
- vi. Allah (swt) says, **"Allah does not command immorality"** (Qur'an 7:28).

3) Propagation (Tabligh)

- i. The responsibility of a Prophet is to convey.
- ii. Allah (swt) says, **"Proclaim it openly"** (Qur'an 15:94).
- iii. Allah (swt) says, **"As for those who hide the proofs and guidance We send down, after We have made them clear to people in the Scripture, God rejects them, and so do others"** (Qur'an 2:159).

4) Intelligence (Fatanah)

- i. Allah (swt) will send intelligent people who have the ability to construct proofs against people who try to manipulate their message. .
- ii. Allah (swt) says, **"Such was the argument We gave to Abraham against his people"** (Qur'an 6:83).

That Which is Impossible

- i. Falsehood
- ii. Untrustworthy
- iii. Withholding any part of the message
- iv. To be Foolish

That Which is Conceivable

[1] Prophets can do anything humanely possible which does not lead to being seen as lowly, humiliated or despicable. Example: they may relieve themselves; eat; fall sick (sickness that is generally not going to turn people away from them); marry; hunger can come upon them; can be

poor or wealthy; can be harmed or wounded by others; sleep (sleep is to their eyes and not their hearts).

[2] Prophets may forget about worldly things and not about the *Shari'ah*, such as a mistake in *salah* or to convey something which has already conveyed.

[3] Prophets may experience difficulties and suffer to elevate their status, like the Prophet Muhammad (saw) who suffered before his death. He tells us: **"I suffer fever like two people"** (Bukhari).

EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS

Types of Extraordinary Events

[1] *Irhas* is anything that is shown extraordinarily and manifested by a prophet pre-prophethood.

[2] *Mu'jizah* comes from *i'jaz* which means to inimitably challenge somebody. A prophet is generally given a miracle to establish their truth. Prophets can't summon a *mu'jizah*, it is only shown by Allah (swt) in the most opportune moments and times.

[3] The similarity of Allah's Messenger (saw) with other prophets is that he had certain miracles that were time-bound and specific – such as water coming down from his fingers, the *barakah* in the food that he blew on and so on. However, the Qur'an is the one miracle of the Prophet (saw) which is a living miracle and is not time bound and specific. The Prophet (saw) said, **"Every Prophet was given miracles because of which people believed, but what I have been given is Divine Inspiration which Allah has revealed to me, so I hope my followers will outnumber the followers of other Prophets on the Day of Resurrection"** (Bukhari).

[4] *Karamah* comes from the word *karam* which means honour. A *karamah* is a miracle of divine honour. Inherently, the *karamah* is a *mu'jizah* of the Prophets because a *karamah* is only given to the *wali* of Allah (swt) due to his following of the prophet, so it's a *mu'jizah* of the prophet and a *karamah* of the *wali* who receives this. It's given to support, reinvigorate and strengthen them. They can't summon these miracles; Allah (swt) gives when he chooses.

[5] A *mu'jizah* and *karamah* are both miracles of divine honour and both inimitable, however, one is associated with a claim to prophecy and the other is not.

[6] *Istidraj* comes from the word *daraj* which means to give some rope and let them go further in deviancy or let loose. *Istidraj* is the opposite of *mu'jizah*. It refers to an imposter who claims prophecy who does a miracle but doesn't work out (like the incident with the imposter Musaylamah, who was told to cure someone's eyes but the saliva infected the person's eye).

Miracles in the Qur'an

[1] Allah (swt) says, **"Whenever Zakariyya went in to see her in her sanctuary, he found her supplied with provisions. He said, 'O Maryam, how is it that you have these provisions?' and she said, 'They are from God: God provides limitlessly for whoever He wills'"** (Qur'an 3:37).

[2] Allah (swt) says, **"Said one who had Knowledge of the Book, 'I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye!' Then when (Sulayman) saw it placed firmly before him, he said, 'This is by the Grace of my Lord!'"** (Qur'an 27:40).

Miracles in the Time of the Sahabah

[1] There were generally more *karamat* after the time of the *sahabah*.

[2] Examples:

- i. The Prophet (saw) used to lean on a pillar when giving *khutbah*. When he didn't lean on the pillar, it started to cry out loud in the middle of the *khutbah*. Everyone heard the pillar crying – this was a clearly manifested miracle in front of everybody.
- ii. The incident of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (ra) in the middle of the *khutbah* who called out, 'O *Sariya*, the mountain! '...
- iii. 'Umar ibn al-Khattab and the letter to the Nile River ...